

Joining Together Our Past, Present and Future



A Strategic Vision ▼ December 15, 2009

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A Quick Summary

The Town of Buckeye asked citizens what future they envision for their community. **We Are Buckeye** is a collective response to that question, as organized by volunteers.

The goals outlined here were not created by the Town or by the volunteers participating in the **We Are Buckeye** project. They emerged from the process. They came from the citizens of Buckeye, who clearly want a voice in the destiny of their community.

From the citizens' original responses three clear themes emerged:

- ***Enhanced Economic Well-Being***
- ***A Well-Planned Urban Community***
- ***A Flourishing Cultural, Social, Educational and Civic Life***

For each theme, citizens suggested many ways to bring about these goals.

What Is "We Are Buckeye" All About?

In 2008, Town management asked citizens to look into the future of Buckeye and envision what they want the community to look like.

We Are Buckeye: A Strategic Vision is a report to the Town Council. It is a collaborative effort to capture our desires, dreams, hopes and vision for Buckeye. We believe this effort represents a fresh perspective.

It's also the beginning of what the **We Are Buckeye** group hopes will be a continuing conversation between the Town and its citizens about the direction of the community.

What participants in the process share is a desire to have a voice in the destiny of Buckeye.

In the pages that follow, you can read about:

- How this plan was created.
- The goals we agreed upon.
- Strategies to achieve the goals.
- Next steps: How to turn vision to reality.
- The original questionnaires, responses and other documents, for those who want a more in-depth understanding of the process.

How Was "We Are Buckeye" Created?

Buckeye is a community of neighborhoods.

Like many communities in Arizona, Buckeye finds itself facing rapid growth and development. The United States census of 2000 counted about 6,500 people; 2006 estimates place the population at almost 40,000. In July 2007, Forbes magazine ranked Buckeye as the second-fastest growing municipality in the U.S.

Growth and other issues demanded a close look. Ideas and theories developed by government would not be enough. The discussion needed to include representatives from across the spectrum of Town residents and stakeholders. The discussion also needed to be broad-based, wide-ranging and transparent.

Shortly after the new Council took office, it went about the business of learning how to conduct just such a discussion.

The information on which **We Are Buckeye** is based was collected by volunteers using an interview process called Appreciative Inquiry. This method was chosen as a way of gathering information because it focuses on recognized successes and asks open-ended questions as opposed to asking respondents to pick from multiple choices.

The interview process posed several challenges, including publicizing the project, getting busy people to participate, and obtaining a true cross-section. However, the participants believe the **We Are Buckeye** process has successfully met these challenges.

The process included workshops with staff, residents, volunteers and consultants to explore how to gather information, impressions, aspirations and opinions from members of the community.

The Town brought in a consultant to teach the Appreciate Inquiry process to Town officials and staff during a day-and-a-half workshop in May 2008. In June



a core staff group received additional training to learn the process and subsequently teach it to 40 volunteers from the community during a September workshop.

This volunteer group, named **We Are Buckeye**, developed interview questions to gather ideas, stories and dreams from people throughout Buckeye. The questions were carefully prepared to avoid promoting specific agendas. We wanted the participants in the interviews to be open, positive, creative and detailed with their answers.

Creating, reviewing and editing the questions took several months. Once the questions were developed, they were put into an interview format with specific guidelines on how to conduct the interview. Consistency was desired for the interview process.

The **We Are Buckeye** participants contacted local groups to set up interviews. These groups included business networking groups, schools, sports venues, the senior center and homeowners associations. The volunteers also conducted interviews with individuals. In addition, the group set up a website and used utility statements, the town newsletter and local newspapers to recruit interview participants. About 200 citizens participated in the initial interviews, responding to the in-depth “essay questions” about the Buckeye they want to see come about.

The questions that volunteers asked citizens include:

- What aspects of Buckeye are most important to you?
- What do you think Buckeye is like now?
- What do you want Buckeye to be?
- What actions should be taken to accomplish your desires for the future of Buckeye?

The results were compiled and broken down by category to determine the top priorities. After much discussion and review, **We Are Buckeye** categorized the results into eight topics, each with supporting action items.

In July and August 2009, each of the six Council members held a “mini-summit” in his or her district. All members of the community were invited to participate. Another 200 citizens participated in this phase of the process, which gathered



public input and discussion about the information collected from the **We Are Buckeye** interviews. Presented with the eight topics, summit attendees ranked them by priority, and the results were compiled into three major goals.

These three topics and the action items that accompany them are the basis for ***We Are Buckeye: A Strategic Vision:***

- Enhanced Economic Well-Being
- A Well-Planned Urban Community
- A Flourishing Cultural, Social, Educational and Civic Life

These goals were not created or suggested by Town administrators or the volunteers participating in the **We Are Buckeye** project. They emerged from the interview process of Buckeye citizens.

Who Responded to "We Are Buckeye"?

A single mom who works as an office manager ... a product researcher who grew up in the farmlands of Wisconsin ... the descendant of three generations of Buckeye farmers ... a retiree who has lived in Buckeye for 32 years ... a 2006 newcomer attracted by the housing boom ... a 20-year-old who was born in Buckeye ... an office manager who enjoys the Green Belt ... a resident who has lived in Buckeye since 1956...

These are just some of the respondents to the We Are Buckeye survey. Here is how some of the citizens describe themselves:

- "I moved here because I got a job here, and I applied here because I love Buckeye."
- "I have been a part of Buckeye since 1962."
- "Born here! Stayed here!"
- "I am a sixteen-year-old girl, a junior at Buckeye Union High. I am VP of the National Honor Society and Student Council. I have a 3.8 grade point average. I'm a very busy student."
- "I have lived in Buckeye for almost three years. I come from a military family, and my father was stationed at Luke Air Force Base. My family wanted to live in an area close to the city, but not too close. Buckeye was the only place to find a decent and affordable house."
- "As soon as I began working for the Town I realized the values of the community closely aligned with my own. Since then I purchased a home here and value the feel of a small Town community."
- "I am a woman [with] four children. I work in a restaurant. I like to live in Buckeye because it is a tranquil place. I have lived here for many years."
- "I have lived in various cities in Maricopa County for over 35 years. I moved to [Buckeye] with a hope for a true community and a bigger house for my growing family."
- "I moved from Atlanta for a job. A ton of people suggested [Buckeye]. I came out to see, and fell in love."

The Three Main Themes

The citizens of Buckeye have been thinking a lot about where the community is headed. Asked what they like about Buckeye, and what they want to see in the future, they brought up many topics, including the Town's economy, environment, history, infrastructure, atmosphere and culture.

To bring these many issues into focus, the **We Are Buckeye** volunteer committee grouped them under three major headings. Below is an overview of what the citizens of Buckeye are saying about their community and its future.

One: Enhanced Economic Well-Being

The citizens of Buckeye realize that a community needs a sound economic foundation. Business and jobs topped the list of concerns. Specifically, they want these goals for the Town:

- Recruit and promote diverse businesses that will contribute to our sales and property tax base as well as create a wide range of job and career opportunities.
- Offer and promote competitive benefit packages that foster high-wage, long-term jobs with good benefits.
- Engage in and encourage positive marketing of Buckeye by supporting local businesses and fostering stakeholder partnerships.
- Create guidelines and regulations that encourage businesses to start, grow and expand within Buckeye.
- Obtain and implement tax incentives and regulatory tools that enable and enhance revitalization efforts.
- Recruit and support businesses that evoke Town pride.
- Value agriculture and our natural environment.



This demand for more business to bring in more

revenue includes a desire for well-planned growth, variously described as “smart” and “incremental.”

“We have the houses. We need the jobs.”

Residents also stressed that they want to attract well-paying jobs, part-time positions and jobs that would promote higher education.

They also want to see business to serve the needs of the people who live in Buckeye, to reduce the need to travel outside the community for basic services.

They also want to see efforts to value and preserve the community's history of agriculture. “Have a model farm so that people [can] see what a farm is like,” one resident suggested.

In addition, respondents often mentioned that a strong economy demands strong leadership. This includes identifying and developing leaders from across the community, encouraging effective communications throughout the Town, a far-sighted attitude towards planning and growth, and a leadership of “people not afraid to do things differently.”

Two: A Well-Planned Urban Community

A well-planned urban community is a priority for the citizens of Buckeye. Specifically, they want Buckeye to:

- Preserve the concept of neighborhoods by locating community centers through community master plans as well as supporting activities and opportunities that promote pride of ownership.
- Encourage citizen participation in the planning and zoning processes and in transportation planning.
- Develop a network of connections among communities to cultivate communication, collaboration and opportunities throughout Buckeye.
- Revitalize the existing downtown and designate historic districts.
- Maintain our rich natural environment by preserving open space and the value of agriculture.
- Enhance our parks and trails systems to celebrate the natural beauty of Buckeye and to promote connections among our communities.

The desire to relieve the impact of urban sprawl comes through strongly. So does a preference for an atmosphere of community.



Many residents want to take steps to preserve the historic architecture of the downtown district.

A master plan for downtown, with hubs to the other districts, is one suggestion. “Downtown needs to have a facelift,” suggests another respondent; “[it] needs to be special where people can go for a reason.”

Preserving older structures to house new business is also an option: “I would like to see all the old business buildings and old ranch homes preserved/enhanced and have some quality food places and businesses to draw folks into Town.”

The environment reappears as a priority for residents. Preserving the “green belt” is seen as good for the planet and community. Things residents would like to see include more parks, and spaces for people from different neighborhoods to meet.

Citizens also emphasized the need to preserve open spaces and the natural beauty of Buckeye. More parks and trails was a common suggestion.

Three: A Flourishing Cultural, Social, Educational and Civic Life

The citizens of Buckeye want more than just economic success. They seek a sense of place, community, and culture. Towards these ends, they want Buckeye to:

- Promote events and activities that celebrate Buckeye's history, diversity and future.
- Develop, enhance and advocate for the arts and for cultural venues.
- Develop and promote educational opportunities for all ages.

- Attract venues that provide safe and enjoyable sports, social, entertainment and other activities for all ages, including teenagers and young adults.
- Develop, enhance and sustain community and school-related programs that are attractive to all age groups.
- Encourage citizen involvement, open communication, volunteerism and the development of community leaders.

“Small-town feel” is a desire often voiced. More Town events, and better communications between residents and officials, can help to create such an atmosphere.

Sports and fitness play a large role. Many residents want to see a variety of choices for all ages, including gym and swimming facilities. Skate and dog parks also are mentioned. The rodeo and Heritage Days are seen as traditions that should be continued, and the creation of harvest festivals is another tradition-preserving suggestion.

In addition, residents also see a need for a downtown full of “night life” venues.

In addition, many express the need to get young people involved in community service. Neighborhood watches, or groups that serve the needs of the long-term-care population, are mentioned as opportunities. Networking between such organizations might provide structure and publicize opportunities.

Recognizing that Buckeye is not just one community, but a web of several communities, the citizens want to see connections between them. “Unofficial” spaces for meetings come up in suggestions. Another idea is informal “mixers” for businesspeople to get to know one another.

Many residents also stressed the need for safety, and advocate continuing and improving connections between the community and the police. A visible police force was listed as a high priority by many residents.

What's Next

We anticipate that **We Are Buckeye: A Strategic Vision** is the beginning of a dialogue between the people of Buckeye, our elected officials, and their appointed staff.

As a true beginning, we encourage the Town Council to include this process as a continuing item for discussion. We also encourage citizens and volunteers to engage themselves by attending Town Council meetings and tracking the progress of initiatives to help bring about the vision of **We Are Buckeye**.

Documents

Original Interview Guide (with questions)

Interview Questions (Please print answers legibly)

Please tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been a part of our community and what brought you to Buckeye? (Please write down their "story" as opposed to simply a short answer.)

Imagine that you have traveled to the future in a time machine. About five years have passed and the year is 2015. Buckeye has developed into a community well-known for its proficient strategic planning. You have watched the progression over the past five years and the community actions that took place to achieve these goals. Looking back on the time between 2009 and 2015, think about what took place during the past five years to bring Buckeye to this point.

- Buckeye is now known for its unique heritage. What actions were taken by the community from 2009 to 2015 to preserve our heritage?
- In 2015, Buckeye is also known for its rich natural environment. What actions were taken by the community between 2009 and 2015 to sustain our natural environment?
- Buckeye enjoys a sound and prosperous local economy. What actions have been taken during the past five years to enhance the economic well-being of our residents?
- Buckeye enjoys the comfortable atmosphere of a small Town. What actions were taken between 2009 and 2015 to foster our small Town feel?
- The high quality of community leadership in Buckeye in 2015 has set the standard for other communities. What actions were taken by the community to promote this culture of leadership?
- Buckeye enjoys a tapestry of connected communities, promoting a feeling of unity throughout the Town. What happened during the five-year period to weave our many communities and neighborhoods together?
- Buckeye has become a model of great urban planning. What steps were taken by the community from 2009 to 2015 to make us successful at urban planning?

- It is now 2015 and Buckeye residents enjoy a flourishing cultural and educational lifestyle. What took place to make this happen?

Tips for Listening

Give your full attentions to the other person
Use body language that shows you are paying attention and that you care
Give others time to think. Don't interrupt.
Encourage the other person to continue talking by non-committal comments such as "yes..." or "Uh-huh".
Occasionally reflect back
Don't get distracted by speech impediments or accents
Focus on meaning as well as words

Necessary Skills for Interviewers

Curiosity for the topic
Respect for the participants
Turn off cell phone and/or pager
General background knowledge
Ability to communicate clearly
Natural friendliness and humor (smile)
Good listener
Avoid expressing personal views
Print legibly
Stay focused and manage time
Ability to listen and think simultaneously
Reflecting/reframing skills
Strong recall skills
Ability to NOT lead the conversation
Remain neutral and aware

Guidelines for the "Interview Conversation"

Keep an open mind about the person you are interviewing and their potential contribution.
Listen more, talk less
Maintain and redirect a position of positive feedback
Present questions as an invitation
Don't interrupt – learn how to wait
Keep participants focused and ask for specific, appropriate details
Be comfortable with silence
Be sure your interviewee knows you value their opinion and experience – always say, "Thank You!"

The original eight themes

- A Culture of Leadership
- Enhanced Economic Well-Being
- A Flourishing Cultural, Social and Educational Life
- Preserving Our Heritage
- A Rich Natural Environment
- Small Town Feel
- A Tapestry of Connected Communities
- A Well-Planned Urban Community

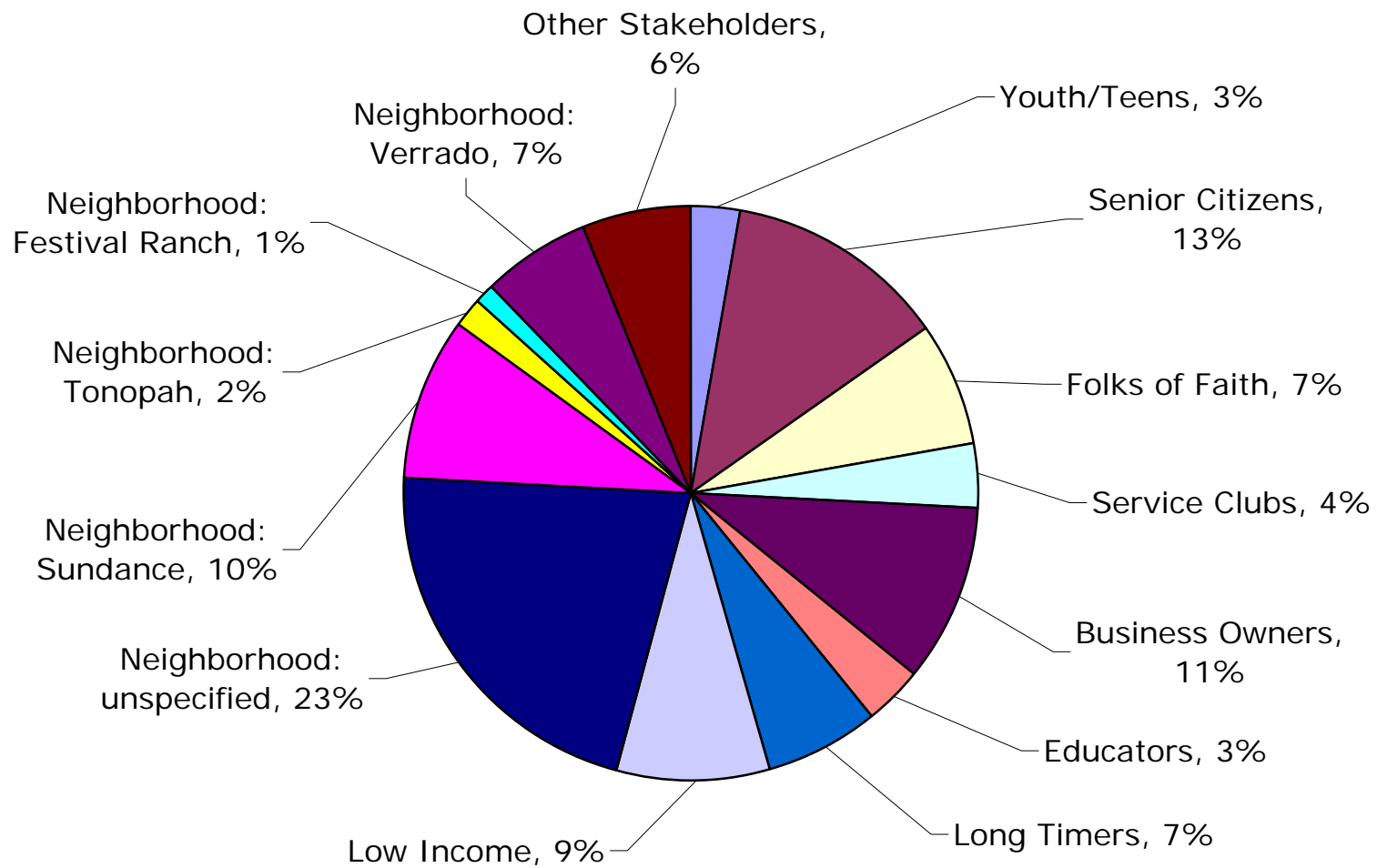
Graphic : "We Are Buckeye" Process

We Are Buckeye Framework for Strategic Planning



Buckeye: Before, Now, and Projected

We Are Buckeye Stakeholders Interviewed



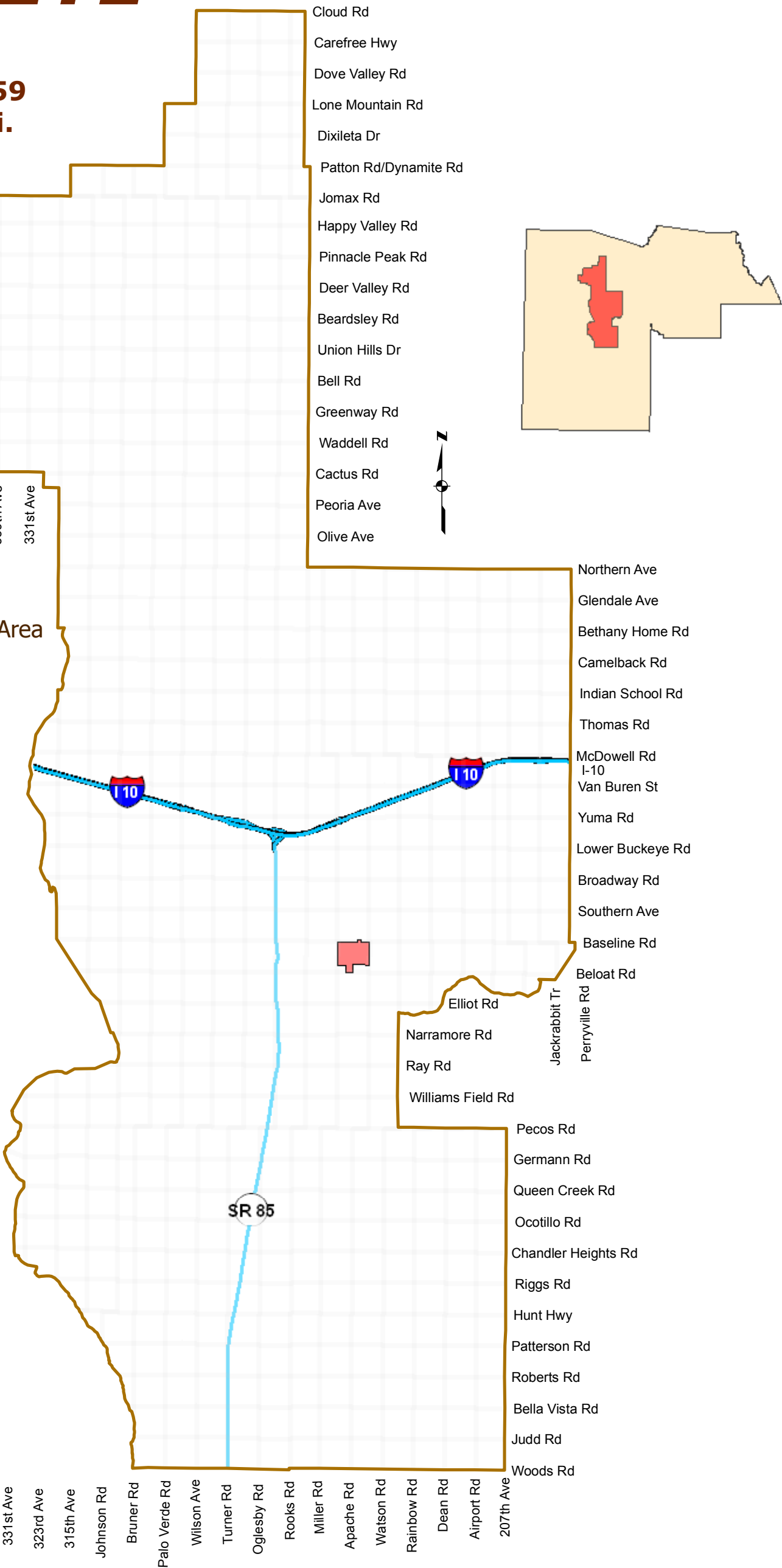
Build-Out

Town of *BUCKEYE*

ANNEXATION HISTORY

1929 - 1959
.83 sq. mi.

Municipal Planning Area
Annexed Area




Town of Buckeye
GIS Virtual Team
Community Development

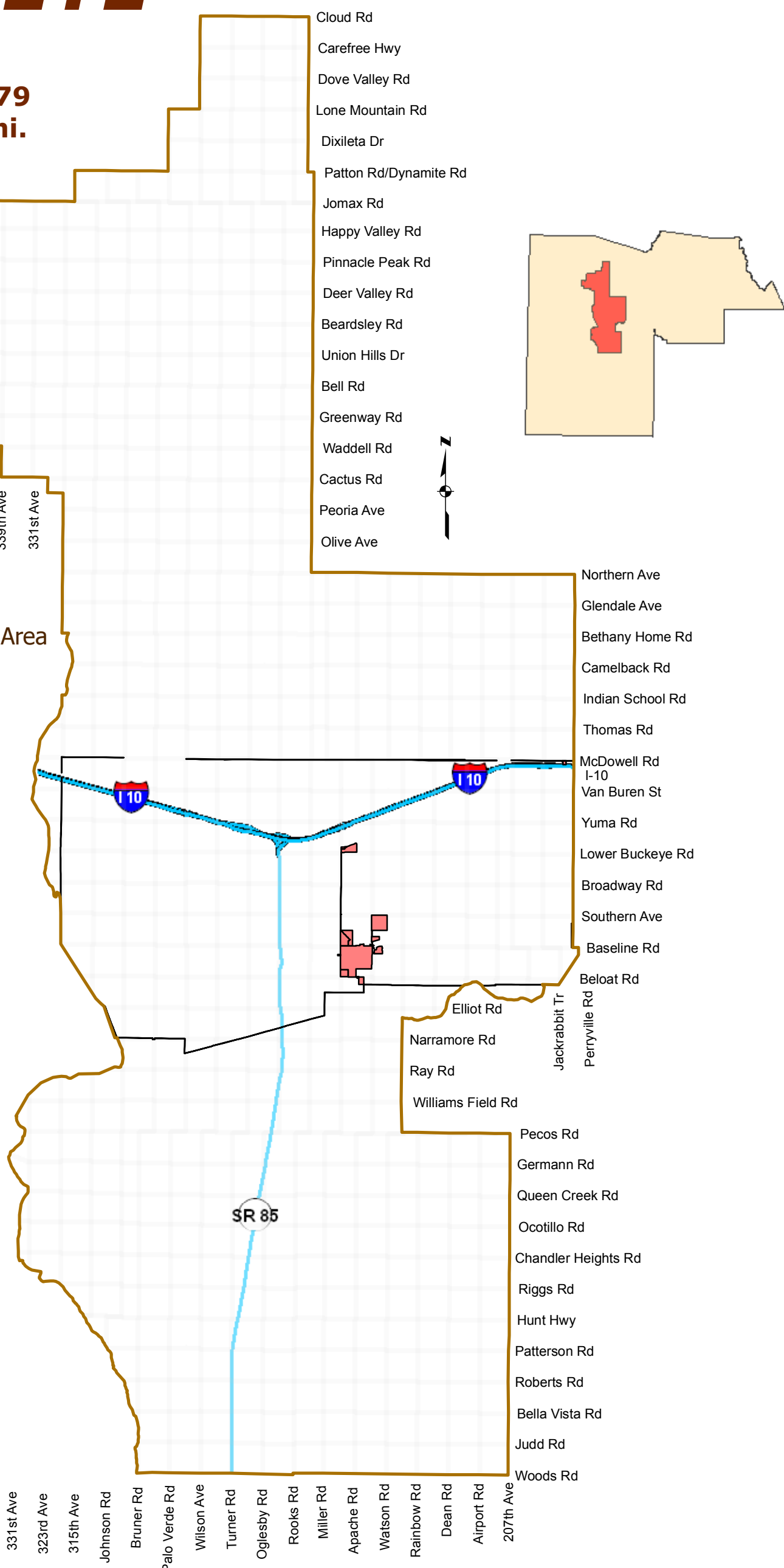
0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles
November 3, 2009

Town of *BUCKEYE*

ANNEXATION HISTORY

1929 - 1979
1.87 sq. mi.

 Municipal Planning Area
 Annexed Area



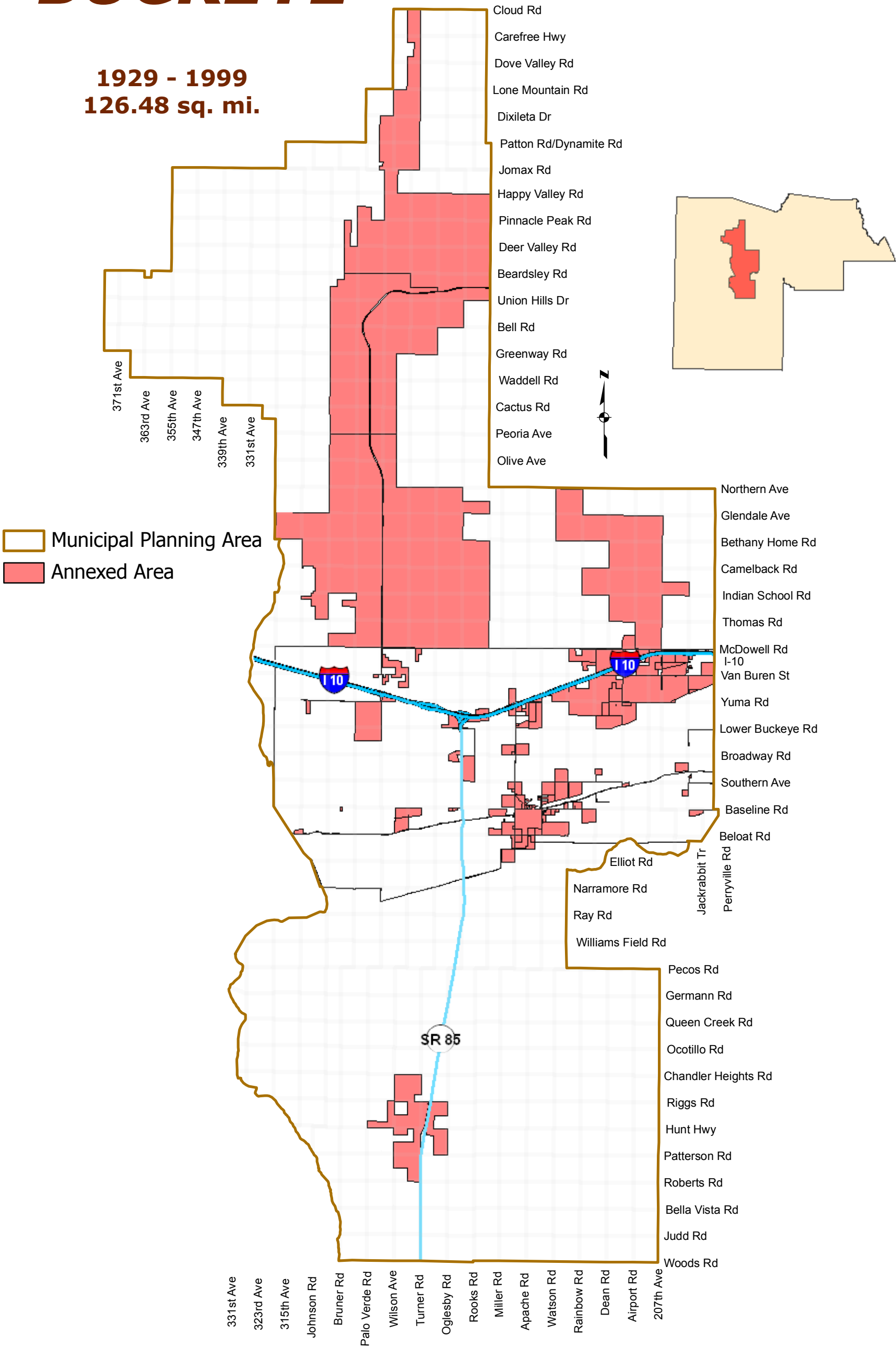
Town of Buckeye
GIS Virtual Team
Community Development

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles
November 3, 2009

Town of *BUCKEYE*

ANNEXATION HISTORY

1929 - 1999
126.48 sq. mi.

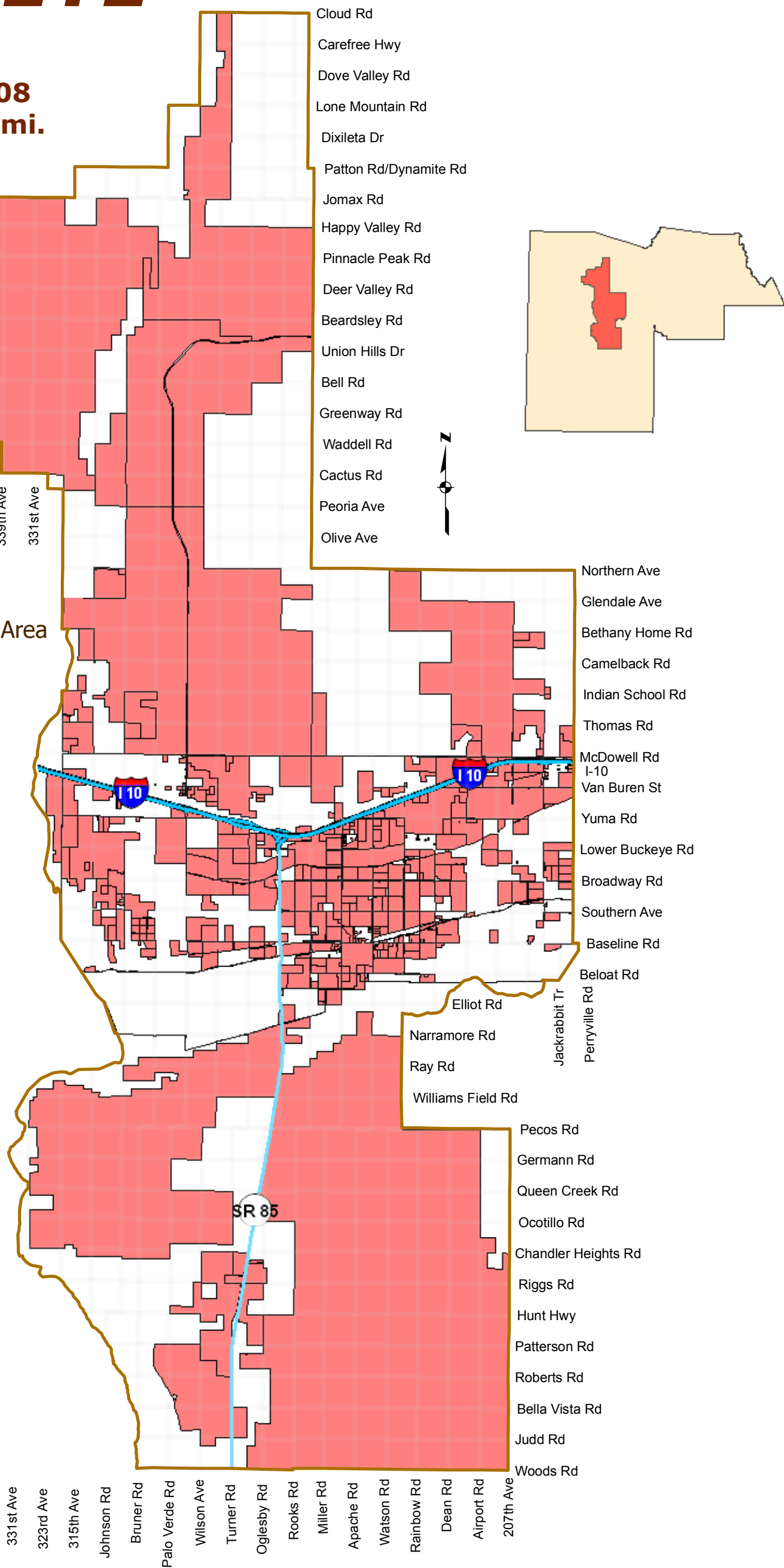


Town of *BUCKEYE*

ANNEXATION HISTORY

1929 - 2008
372.89 sq. mi.

 Municipal Planning Area
 Annexed Area



Town of Buckeye
GIS Virtual Team
Community Development

November 3, 2009

Town of BUCKEYE

Adopted January 18, 2008

Notes:

All Community Master Plans (CMP) and development agreements remain as valid entitlements and should be referred to in conjunction with the Buckeye General Plan. The Land Use Map strives to reflect the CMP land uses as accurately as possible. The adopted entitlements by the Town of Buckeye are valid and if any changes are made, the policies and guidelines outlined in the Buckeye General Plan will be followed.

Floodway Transitional Areas are advisory in nature. Though development within these areas is permitted at the level of the designated General Plan land use, the Town wishes to emphasize the importance of awareness of both the hazards and sensitivities in these identified areas. The Town strongly encourages these considerations being addressed in development plans for properties within these areas.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the Town of Buckeye makes no warranty, expressed or implied, as to its absolute accuracy and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof.

Arterial / River crossings are conceptual. This map demonstrates the number of crossings needed to support development at build-out. Final locations and the number of crossings will be determined through engineering and water studies.

Town of Buckeye General Plan Land Use indicates land within the 65 day-night noise level (dnl) contour pertaining to Luke Air Force Base and the Buckeye Airport. Land within the designated 65 dnl adjacent to a military airport or ancillary military facility is restricted by the criteria set forth in A.R.S. 28-8481(J) which outlines appropriate land uses for such land. Any General Plan Amendment of land within these areas must also comply with all requirements as well as the compatible land uses outlined in A.R.S. 28-8481(J). The Town of Buckeye is committed to ensuring that land uses in the high noise or accident potential zones are compatible with the operation of Luke Air Force Base and the Buckeye Airport. Residential uses shown on the land use map in the 65 dnl area for Luke Air Force Base were zoned and had a development plan in place for those uses prior to Dec 31, 2000. These properties continue to be subject to A.R.S. 28-8481, but the development plans that have been in place prior to December 31, 2000 for these properties comply with the statute.

Floodway Transitional Areas

65 db noise contour

Downtown Expansion Area

Very Low Density 0-1 du/ac

Low Density 1.01-3 du/ac

Medium Density 3.01-6 du/ac

Medium High Density 6.01-10 du/ac

High Density 10.01-15 du/ac

Master Planned Community

COMMERCIAL

Community Commercial

Regional Commercial

EMPLOYMENT

Professional Office

Business Park

Industrial

Downtown Buckeye

OTHER

Mixed Use

Government Center

Military

Open Space

Map labels include: White Tanks Fwy, Hassavampa North-South Fwy, Alden Waters Pkwy, Bell Pkwy, Wintersburg Pkwy, 371st Ave, 363rd Ave, 355th Ave, 347th Ave, 339th Ave, 331st Ave, 323rd Ave, 331st Ave, 323rd Ave, 315th Ave, Johnson Rd, Bruner Rd, Palo Verde Rd, Wilson Ave, Turner Rd, Oglesby Rd, Rocks Rd, Miller Rd, Apache Rd, Watson Rd, Rainbow Rd, Dean Rd, Airport Rd, 207th Ave, Northern Ave, Glendale Ave, Bethany Home Rd, Camelback Rd, Indian School Rd, Thomas Rd, McDowell Rd I-10, Van Buren St, Yuma Rd, Lower Buckeye Rd, Broadway Rd, Southern Ave, Baseline Rd, Beloit Rd, Elliot Rd, Narramore Rd, Ray Rd, Williams Field Rd, Pecos Rd, Germann Rd, Queen Creek Rd, Ocotillo Rd, Chandler Heights Rd, Riggs Rd, Hunt Hwy, Patterson Rd, Roberts Rd, Bella Vista Rd, Judd Rd, Woods Rd, Jackrabbit Tr, Perryville Rd, SR 801, SR 85, Buckeye Airport 65 db DNL, Luke AFB 65 db DNL, Union Pacific RR, Yuma Pkwy, McDowell Pkwy, Turner Pkwy, Sun Valley Pkwy, Vandyke Way.

Maricopa County

Area of Interest Shown in Red

FIGURE 3-4

TOWN OF BUCKEYE
GENERAL PLAN LAND USE

One Town, One Vision!
General Plan and Development Code

BUCKEYE VALLEY HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ENTERING
BUCKEYE
ELEVATION 867
FOUNDED



Growing Our Buckeye





FUTURE

PRESENT

PAST

We Are
Buckeye